

SENATE BILL 2191
By Wilder

AN ACT to provide for the erection of signs on U.S. Highway 51
proclaiming Tipton County as the "Birthplace of Isaac
Hayes".

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

WHEREAS, from time to time, this General Assembly has seen fit to recognize
Tennessee's sons and daughters and their many accomplishments in the arts on this state's
highway system; and

WHEREAS, no Tennessee artist could possibly be more deserving of such recognition
than legendary singer, songwriter, musician and Soul Man, Isaac Hayes; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being one of the creators of the Memphis Sound while at Stax
Records, Isaac Hayes is an innovative solo artist whose music combines elements of rhythm-
and-blues, soul and jazz to create a unique signature sound that identifies him as a progenitor
of widely divergent genres, from disco to hip-hop; and

WHEREAS, in addition to this peerless musical legacy, he has also distinguished himself
as one of the most influential and productive figures in African American culture today through
his many good works in service of literacy and education across the globe; and

WHEREAS, born in the rural poverty of a sharecropper's family in Covington, Tipton
County, Isaac Hayes sang publicly for the first time at an Easter ceremony at Saint Stephen's
Chapel when he was only three years old; and

WHEREAS, Issac Hayes attended a small schoolhouse in Rialto until third grade when
he moved to Memphis, graduated from Memphis Manassas High School in 1962, and soon
thereafter began playing dates as a keyboardist at the newest record label in town, Stax
Records; and

WHEREAS, he quickly progressed from session player to an ubiquitous presence at Stax; collaborating with David Porter, Isaac Hayes penned, arranged and produced some two hundred soul standards in a very short period of time, including “Hold On! I’m Comin,” “I Thank You,” the R&B Grammy award winning “Soul Man,” “B-A-B-Y,” and “When Something Is Wrong With My Baby”; and

WHEREAS, his work with Sam and Dave, Otis Redding, Booker T and the MGs, the Mar-Keys, the Bar-Kays, Rufus and Carla Thomas, and virtually the entire Stax roster was seminal in creating “The Memphis Sound” that transformed popular music; and

WHEREAS, had his musical legacy ended there, Isaac Hayes’ first ballot selection to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame would have been assured, but instead he embarked upon a genre-bending career as a solo artist that continues to prosper and inspire today; and

WHEREAS, his impressive discography includes seven number one R&B albums and ranges from his 1967 debut *Presenting Isaac Hayes* and the landmark 1969 album *Hot Buttered Soul* to 1995’s *Branded and Raw and Refined* and 2003’s *Instrumentals*; and

WHEREAS, although he has produced many memorable songs and albums, Isaac Hayes is nearly universally identified with the 1971 soundtrack double album and musical score for the movie *Shaft* and the theme song single of the same name; and

WHEREAS, *Shaft* was the first album in history by a solo black artist to reach number one on both the pop and R&B charts, and Isaac Hayes was the first African American composer to win an Oscar for the Best Musical Score; *Shaft* also won a Golden Globe award and three Grammy awards; and

WHEREAS, during the succeeding years, Isaac Hayes has pursued a musical career that is second to none in innovation and influence on his fellow artists; his work has been sampled nearly 200 times by rappers and rockers alike; and

WHEREAS, Isaac Hayes has also distinguished himself as a talented actor, appearing in *Escape from New York*, *I’m Gonna ‘Git You, Sucka*, and numerous other films and television shows; and

WHEREAS, he has bridged the generation gap and established himself as an icon for a whole new generation through his role as Jerome “Chef” McElroy, Cartman’s favorite cafeteria worker on the animated television series *South Park*; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hayes also played an instrumental role in the opening of Soulsville, the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, and is a persuasive fundraiser on behalf of the Stax Music Academy, a facility where he and others will develop and teach future Memphis musicians; and

WHEREAS, inspired by the kindness and concern shown for him by his teachers at Manassas High School, Isaac Hayes has long been dedicated to improving literacy, education and teaching initiatives; and

WHEREAS, a humanitarian mission to Ghana in the early 1990s resulted in Isaac Hayes’ coronation as King for Development in the Ada coastal district of Ghana, where he is a member of the Royal Family; instead of resting on his royal laurels, he raised money to build a large educational facility in Ada called NekoTech that not only provides Internet access and education in reading, pedagogy, computer technology, and health, but also houses a chapter of the World Literacy Crusade; and

WHEREAS, believing strongly that literacy and education are the keys to freedom and prosperity, he founded the Isaac Hayes Foundation whose mission is to enable people around the world to become whole by promoting literacy, music education, nutritional education, and innovative programs that raise self-esteem among the underprivileged and teach young people how to study; he also serves as international spokesperson for the World Literacy Crusade, which currently has over 20 literacy programs in five countries with more than 1,800 participants; and

WHEREAS, Isaac Hayes is, without question, an accomplished musical artist, but he may be an even more valuable public servant and citizen of the world; his many contributions to promoting literacy worldwide, in addition to his singular musical legacy, should be appropriately recognized in his native county of Tipton; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the department of transportation is directed to erect and maintain signs on U.S. Highway 51 southbound at the Tipton County - Lauderdale County boundary (at the Hatchie River near Rialto) proclaiming Tipton County as the "Birthplace of Isaac Hayes" to honor one of the greatest artists in the history of American popular music.

SECTION 2. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 3. This act shall become operative only if the Federal Highway Administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.